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21 November 1963

Dear Harlan,

Many thanks for your letter of 16 November sending me a copy of your speech to the AFL-CIO, "The Agony of Success." I found this extremely interesting as I did your talk to the Midcareerists. I might note that your talk to the Midcareerists was exceedingly well received and I think gave the group the clearest possible impression of the work of the international organizations, something that is not always well understood throughout the Government. I know that I found it most stimulating and heard many complimentary remarks from the members of the course afterwards. We certainly appreciated your taking the time to come over and do the job, and I think you can rest assured that it was an effort well spent. Further, I think that you can also feel that you sowed some fertile seeds in the area of "interference." I am planning to stimulate some studies in this area and will let you have the results when they come through.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,


Lyman B. Kirkpatrick
Executive Director

STAT

and
Hon. Harlan Cleveland
Assistant Secretary of State
for International Organization Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

LBK:drm

Transmitted by messenger
Orig- Addressee: (1) ER; 1-ExDir

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

November 16, 1963

Dear Kirk:

Thanks very much for the lunch.
I hope the informal lecture was useful
to the mid-careerists.

You might be interested to see the
line I took with the AFL-CIO in the
attached speech, "The Agony of Success".
You got a whiff of this in my remarks
to the mid-career group.

Let's get together more often.
The gaps are too long.

Warmest regards.

Sincerely,


Harlan Cleveland

The Honorable
Lyman Kirkpatrick,
Executive Director,
Central Intelligence Agency,
Vienna, Virginia.

November 13, 1963

FOR THE PRESS

PR 587

FOR RELEASE AT 2:15 P.M. E.S.T., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1963
NOT TO BE PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED, QUOTED FROM, OR USED IN ANY WAY.

AN ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE
HARLAN CLEVELAND, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, AT THE
AFL-CIO CONVENTION,
NEW YORK CITY, AMERICANA HOTEL,
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1963

THE AGONY OF SUCCESS

I.

I am especially pleased to be here because we are all -- by choice or necessity -- in the same business: we all make U.S. foreign policy, and we all help sustain it.

In our country, foreign policy is formed and carried out not just by the President and the State Department, but by our whole people.

Some people think that the resulting babel of voices in our foreign policy is proof-positive of the weakness of our democratic system. The American "image", they say, should be crystal clear and forever consistent; America, they say, should speak with a single voice -- the way the communists do, or at least are supposed to do.

Of course, there are rare moments when it is imperative for a single voice to speak for the whole nation. When nuclear powers seemed to be on a collision course in the Caribbean last October, for example, the President's voice had to come through loud and clear around the world -- with no static.

But most of the time, what the rest of the world sees is the great diversity of our society -- a jumble of business firms and farm organizations and universities and churches and foundations and -- last but not largest by far -- the American labor movement. That's the way it should be. That's the kind of society we are; and this diversity is the ultimate source of our current strength and our future durability. The sounds you hear -- of many voices talking at once -- are the needful noises of democracy.

To you

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To you of all people, I don't have to sell the idea that broad participation by private organizations in foreign policy is not only satisfying to the democratic impulse, but absolutely essential if we are to do what history commands us to do -- which is to help other people build free institutions within their societies and then work with them to build a workable system of world peace.

No private organization in the country has understood this more clearly than the American labor movement. No segment of our society has done more to translate that understanding into action abroad. This is not flattery, but fact.

You not only supported but helped to staff and run the Marshall Plan. I was there, and I can testify that the participation of men drawn from the ranks of organized labor helped make the Marshall Plan a vehicle for social change as well as a program for economic reconstruction.

You have understood that in times of rapid political change, diplomacy is not just the act of getting along with the current powers-that-be in each country; modern diplomacy is the art of getting along with the next government as well. The labor attaches, first appointed to American embassies only twenty years ago, can use the bond of union membership to establish effective relations with those new leaders, trained for politics in the labor movement, who are coming into political power in many parts of the world. Many a foreign door has been opened in recent years by a union card in the hand of an American trade unionist.

You have helped to build free trade unions in many countries -- and conducted, as well, an impressive variety of international exchange and visitor programs. At this very convention, I understand, you have 250 labor leaders as invited guests from overseas.

In sum, you have brought to bear on our foreign policy that extraordinary talent for educating people while organizing them, which is the hallmark of the American labor movement -- and you have fortified this foresight with a full measure of your rich resources of time and talent and money.

It was your heads-up vision and massive support that made the International Labor Organization the standard-setter for labor conditions throughout the free world -- and your sense of history that turned the ILO, after the Second World War, toward the tasks of manpower training in the world's newly developing societies.

Meanwhile, you have made your influence felt at home -- in support of the most positive and progressive aspects of U.S. foreign policy.

Your support from the outset helped build a solid domestic political base for the United Nations in this country. And when the controversial UN loan bill came up last year, you helped justify -- and helped produce -- a convincing two-to-one approval in the House of Representatives and an overwhelming three-to-one approval in the Senate.

Your support from the outset helped put through the so-called foreign aid program; and you have repeatedly helped to save it from well-intentioned tinkerers;

and your leaders have persisted in the refreshing notion that instead of nibbling the foreign aid program to death, we should turn our talents to improving

it -- on the beautifully simple proposition that this would serve the basic interests of the United States of America. In the atmosphere of the moment, that attitude is not only refreshing, but positively breath-taking.

II.

Because you have understood so well the interaction of American politics with international politics, I am emboldened to offer this afternoon some thoughts about the politics of American foreign policy. For once again the electoral fit is upon us -- and once again it is open season on foreign policy.

Candidates for the dubious privilege of running against President Kennedy will busy themselves by fanning our frustrations with tidy, black-and-white solutions to messy and colorful problems.

Special interests will take advantage of the campaign climate to complain ahead of time about next year's tariff talks.

Small but noisy groups will demand that the UN stop making peace for a moment so they can get off -- presumably because they would rather make war than make peace with foreigners.

People who feed on fear and frustration will ride their frantic circuits hawking the dubious doctrine that only by abandoning our freedoms can we save them from communism.

As the election campaign begins to warm up, the snipers are testing their range, the sound of cross-fire is heard in the land, and the nonsense level is on the rise.

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Yet of all the dangers we face in a hazardous world at a riskful time, this is one danger that we ought to be able to avoid: we could -- if we wanted to -- stop talking nonsense among ourselves.

III.

Even under the best of conditions, the operation of U.S. foreign policy generates a chronic low-grade fever in the body politic -- induced by acute frustration. The most notable symptoms are anxiety reactions, expressed in a fearful, angry, or indignant tone of voice.

And some of this is inescapable -- because the frustrations are not apparent, but real. They are caused by the simple fact that we are the greatest power on earth -- and we therefore have to be the most responsible power on earth. To hold great power under restraint is the most trying test of how tough -- which is to say, how mature -- a nation is.

There is no cure for this in national strength and national success: the more powerful we get, the more success we achieve, the more we get involved in other people's troubles, and the more we have to make them our own.

For there's a funny thing about success: it makes life more complicated.

I wouldn't know from personal experience what happens when a man succeeds in amassing a million dollars, but I have the impression that it increases both his personal problems and his social complications.

Certainly when a man succeeds in reaching a higher position in an organization or profession, he is promptly rewarded with harder work, greater controversy, and tougher decisions than he had before. When a candidate for public office succeeds at the polls he wins, in return for his trouble, a bigger bucket of more complex trouble.

And any man who has won an affirmative answer to a marriage proposal knows what complexity flows from that success.

But somehow some people think that world affairs ought to be different. The solution of any problem, they feel, should reduce by one the number of problems remaining to be solved. They assume that success in achieving some aim of foreign policy today should make international life that much easier and simpler tomorrow.

Yet the plain fact is that in international politics the success of past and present policies can make life tomorrow quite a bit more frustrating than it was yesterday.

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IV.

Take the success of Woodrow Wilson's notion -- it was Jefferson's too -- that our national policy is to promote the self-determination of peoples. We were the original anti-colonial people, and in half a century we have helped half a hundred peoples to achieve their national independence.

But this success hardly made things simpler for us. We wanted the leaders of those nations to be independent, and we wanted them as members of the United Nations. But they are certainly less comfortable to live with now -- precisely because they are, by the dozens, members of the United Nations, precisely because they are independent -- even of us.

Take, as another example, what is generally accepted as one of the most brilliant foreign policy successes of all times: the Marshall Plan. Our aim was to help Europe return to health, and we succeeded.

A few years ago one of the weekly news magazines -- which had opposed the Marshall Plan hammer and tongs -- advertised on its front cover an article entitled "The World's Greatest Success Story -- Now It Can Be Told". The world's greatest success story turned out to be the story of the Marshall Plan. But the main burden of the article was to complain rather bitterly that the Marshall Plan was such a success that Europe had become too healthy. The Europeans, the article protested, already were competing too aggressively for export markets and forcing American industry to get up early in the morning to stay in the game.

Of course, that is not even half the price we are paying for the success of our post-war policy in Europe. Europe now stands on its own feet, looks us straight in the eye, and bargains with us hard on tariff rates and money matters. Europe even feels strong enough to want a larger voice in the military defense of Europe. Of course, this is what we really wanted all along, because self-reliant nations were the realistic alternative to a communist takeover. But the success of our policy certainly has made life in the Atlantic Community more complicated -- and, for the time being, more frustrating.

V.

As a third example of frustration induced by our own efforts, let's look at the troubles we have brought upon ourselves by promoting -- successfully -- a United Nations with the capacity to act.

In its short and turbulent life the United Nations has acquired considerable know-how in its primary job of ~~promoting~~ ~~the~~ ~~United Nations~~ ~~with the capacity to act.~~

by following theoretical or legal blueprints for keeping the peace, but by working at it the hard way.

In the past eighteen years, the United Nations has been called upon to help get Soviet troops out of Iran; to stop two wars between Indonesia and the Netherlands and two more growing out of Arab-Israeli rivalry in the Middle East; to help put down a civil war in Greece; to police an armistice in the Vale of Kashmir; to defend Korea against communist invasion; to prevent civil war and outside intervention in the Congo; and to help put out quite a number of other fires around the world. In all of these crises the U.S. did its share -- and sometimes we carried the lion's share -- because we are the lion.

The UN has emerged from each of these crises, as Ulysses did from the trials that beset him, stronger than it was before. Each time the Organization learned another lesson in the practical business of keeping the peace. It has, then, been quite successful in its appointed task as peacekeeper -- and the world is a safer place for that.

But does this mean that every time the United Nations puts out a fire some place, the world is less flammable and our responsibilities are fewer? Not at all.

In 1948, the United Nations succeeded in stopping a war between the Arab states and Israel. And for each of the fifteen years that followed the United Nations has been caring for a million Arab refugees -- one of the most thankless, heartbreaking and unyielding problems of our times. Nobody else will do the job, so the United Nations does it and we pay for most of it; and there is no end in sight.

In 1956, the United Nations succeeded in obtaining a cease-fire and a withdrawal of warring forces at Suez. And for the next seven years, it has had to supervise that truce. At this very moment, some 6,000 men make up the Emergency Force in the Middle East which patrols -- by foot, jeep, and aircraft -- the armistice lines in the Gaza strip, in the Sinai Desert and at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba. They have been doing it night and day since 1957. Every year we have to go to the Congress and ask for funds to help keep the lid on in the Middle East for another twelve months.

In 1962, the United Nations finally succeeded in its agonizing assignment of restoring peace and order and independence to the Congo. So now it faces the consequence: the stupendous task of helping the Congo retain that order and independence by learning to manage its own affairs, run its own institutions, and stand on its own feet economically.

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Thus does every success in strengthening the UN lead to more U.S. involvement in more opportunities to build more peacekeeping machinery to resolve more dangerous conflicts. The work isn't easy, but it's hardly the moment to stop trying. And it is a curious time to propose, as some few Americans are proposing, that the UN be cut back to a debating society that cannot actually do anything. That's the Soviet ambition for the UN's future: a place for loud speeches and guaranteed inaction. Let us not help them attain it.

VI.

Consider one final example of success leading to feelings of frustration. Starting with the famous fourth point in President Truman's 1949 Inaugural Address, we undertook a worldwide effort to modernize the poorer countries, some of them ancient nations and some of them brand new, by sending them technical aid and investment loans.

Aid can, of course, be used for many purposes, just as water coming from a hose can be used to put out leaf fires, to wash the car, to cool off the children in summer, to break up a dog fight, or even to water the garden. To ask, "Is the water successful?", you first have to know what it is being used for.

Our aid has been used, over the years, to build up the armed forces of weak nations on the periphery of the communist world; to shore up their economies to permit them to carry an oversized defense load; to maintain political stability by tiding friendly nations over economic crises; and to water the garden of economic and social development. Since 1950 our aid has been focused increasingly on this last purpose -- especially to help grow trained people, which takes longer than growing anything else--people who can learn to manage the public and agricultural extension services, the banks and factories and transportation networks, and institutions for land reform and tax reform, the schools and postoffices, budget bureaus and foreign ministries and all the rest of what it takes to run a modern society.

By and large, this unprecedented program has paid off. The weak nations on the periphery of the communist world are still there -- and stronger. Not one of the new nations created since the end of the Second World War has chosen communism as a way of life and government; and if some of them have not chosen democracy as we know it either, none is a hopeless case. The fourteen nations of Western Europe and Japan used our aid so well that they were phased out long ago. Since then, Spain and Lebanon have joined this group, and six other nations are in the process of being terminated over the next few years -- if we don't dump them overboard in midstream.

We have been doing all this for many years. Any has called the

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called the long-term cost of frustrating those who would bury democracy, and of "reinforcing our own strength by supporting around us a community of resolute, prospering, free world societies."

And who in his right mind would expect this job to be finished in a decade or two? What man in touch with reality would expect this gigantic operation to be carried out with no errors and with no waste anywhere? By what rational process is anyone led to expect that this complex, experimental and sometimes mysterious task would move forward smoothly everywhere in the world with no delays and no disappointments?

Yet the debate on the foreign aid bill this year is full of the sounds of weariness, impatience, anxiety and depression -- of frustration because the job has not been finished or has been tarnished with error, delay or disappointment here and there from time to time.

This is a time when the so-called burden of foreign aid is getting lighter -- not heavier. A decade ago we were spending two percent of the gross national produce to help other people help themselves, this year we propose to spend less than one percent for that purpose.

This is a time when the preponderant part -- sixty percent -- of the non-military aid program takes the form of repayable loans instead of the free grants that made up ninety percent of the program in Marshall Plan days.

This is a time when ninety cents out of every aid dollar are spent in the United States and account for well over half a million direct jobs for American workers -- not counting the much greater indirect employment.

This is a time when the evidence shows that we Americans have greater talents and more success -- and are much more welcome -- at this business than our principal rivals. The Soviets certainly have not retired as competitors -- witness the aid extended to Somalia this week -- but they have chalked up an impressive collection of costly aid failures.

This is a time when the worst thing that can be said about the foreign aid program is that it operates under a miscle-bound law stuffed with restrictions designed to prevent all past mistakes, to preclude quick or flexible action, and to legislate changes inside foreign countries which can only be the product of their domestic politics, not ours.

Let us admit it, at least to ourselves: even though we know better we are still tackling twenty-year problems with five-year

plans based

plans based on two-year personnel working with one-year appropriations. That wasn't good enough even in the 1950's. It is not nearly good enough for the Sixties.

VII.

We are privileged, you and I, to live in a time when the frustrations of American foreign policy are often the agony of success, while the frustrations of Soviet foreign policy are typically the agony of failure.

They failed to subvert the nationalist revolutions and spark the chain of communist re volts that Lenin dreamed of. They failed to make a political killing with aid and trade -- they failed to scare people with nuclear terror -- they failed to destroy the UN -- they failed to keep their once-monolithic bloc glued together. They failed, by and large, because of Western counter-measures under American leadership -- witness the Marshall Plan and development aid -- and because of United Nations actions we supported -- witness the Congo.

At a time like this I do not for one instant believe we are going to lose the vision, tire of the race, and throw in the towel -- as some would have us do.

One reason for staying the course -- though not the best reason -- is that quitting is just what the communists would like us to do.

Another reason for sticking determinedly at it is simply that these counsels of frustration and despair are not the stuff of leadership. Let those who are tired of the tasks of leadership ask themselves whether they are ready to live in the kind of world community that others will build if we decide the task is too much for us.

But the first and best reason why we are not going to stop building free institutions abroad -- and building international organizations to keep the peace -- is simply that we are not made that way. A great Republican President said it half a century ago: "God Almighty hates a quitter." The verb seems out of character for the Almighty, but the sentiment is strictly American.

* * *